



Dana E. Blackwell
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LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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ADELINA SORKIN, LCSW/ACSW
DR. HARRIETTE WILLIAMS, CHAIR

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, February 9, 2004, in room 743 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Joyce Fahey
Phalen G. Hurewitz
Daisy Ma
Dr. La-Doris McClaney
Sandra Rudnick
Adelina Sorkin
Dr. Harriette Williams

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Carol O. Biondi
Patricia Curry
Brenda Galloway
Helen Kleinberg
Christina S. Mattingly

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda for the February 9, 2004 meeting was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes for the January 5, 2004 and January 26, 2004 general meetings were unanimously approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- Chair Williams expressed her enthusiasm with the efforts of the California Permanency Youth Project (CPYP). The CPYP will be sponsoring a work group at

the end of February at which she has asked the Commission's Executive Director to attend.

- Chair Williams congratulated Elizabeth Hinton, Executive Assistant, on 15 years of County service. This achievement will be recognized at a ceremony led by the Executive Office. Chair Williams expressed her appreciation to Ms. Hinton for the three years she has been apart of the Commission and the care she provides to each of the Commissioners.

NEW BUSINESS

First 5 LA Connect: Commissioner Hurewitz provided the historical context by which the First 5 LA Commission developed First 5 LA Connect, a warm line intended as a resource for expectant mothers, parents and caregivers. Commissioner Hurewitz warmly introduced Amanda Perez-Guzman, Gayle Byock and Dr. Pejman Salimpour, President and CEO NexCare Collaborative, Inc. (NexCare), which operates the warm line. He lauded Dr. Salimpour for the leadership he has provided in its development and implementation.

Amanda Perez-Guzman, First 5 LA Commission, explained that First 5 LA Connect (warm line) is the Commission's signature project. First 5 LA Commission made a significant investment to ensure that service, technology and staff meet the needs of the community and population. She credited NexCare and Dr. Salimpour for the success and efficacy of the warm line.

Dr. Salimpour began his presentation by acknowledging and thanking Commissioner Hurewitz for his efforts, dedication and support of the warm line. Dr. Salimpour stated that the development of the warm line was initiated in May 2002 and was fully operational in May 2003. He explained that NexCare is a collaborative of 20 organizations in Los Angeles County. Each agency participates fully in the activities supporting the warm line. UCLA is one of the collaborative participants and also provides an internal evaluation of the program. Additionally, there is an external evaluation team that acts as an outside auditor to gauge the effectiveness of warm line.

Dr. Salimpour explained that the warm line provides two services: 1) information and referral, and 2) parent support and assistance. Information and referral is intended to assist families' access to resources in their communities. He believes that the warm line has filled a service gap for many families who would not know how to get the assistance they need to ensure their children are safe and healthy. Examples of assistance provided include child care referrals, nursing education, medical care referrals, and health insurance enrollment assistance. Dr. Salimpour stated that the warm line has three levels of staff that provide assistance: Information and Referral Specialists, Social Workers, Psychologists and Professional Health Advisors.

A database has been created that includes over 12,000 agencies that help families with health and social service needs. A state of the art call center has also been developed as well as a software program that allows the staff to effectively and efficiently handle a

large volume of calls into the warm line, connect callers to resources, and to track needs and identify gaps in service provision.

Dr. Salimpour stated that late in 2003, NexCare partnered with Telemundo to broadcast ways in which families could acquire health insurance for their children. From this partnership, Dr. Salimpour indicated that thousands of children received health insurance or were able to re-enroll in their insurance plans. A system has been put in place to follow up with families to ensure future reenrollment.

Dr. Salimpour described a new outbound call program to mothers who recently gave birth. The pilot program targets mother in the San Fernando Valley, through area hospitals. He explained that mothers give consent while in the hospital to be contacted by the program's Professional Health Advisors who call the mothers approximately one week after they have left the hospital to provide them with education about caring for a new born and how to improve their parenting skills. To date, the program has contacted approximately 2,000 mothers, most of whom are uninsured or have medi-cal. Early findings indicate that the great majority of mothers want to breast feed and have begun doing so. However 30% are having difficulty and are ready to quit based on a variety of issues. Approximately 70% of mothers are supplementing their babies' milk consumption with water and 12% of mothers do not know to call 911 in case of an emergency.

Dr. Salimpour acknowledged that due to community, stakeholder and parent feedback, the warm line continues to improve. He also indicated that the vast majority of mothers invite follow-up calls and refer the service to others in their community.

Commissioner Sorkin asked Dr. Salimpour to 1) describe the current and potential interface between the Department and the warm line and 2) whether staff are mandated to report child safety issues. Dr. Salimpour stated that staff are mandated reporters, and there is a "hot button" at the call center that goes directly to the Department's Command Post. He further responded that he has been working closely with Dr. Sanders and Dr. Sophy to ensure that children are safe.

Commissioner McClaney asked Dr. Salimpour to describe the service areas in which significant gaps exist. Dr. Salimpour indicated that access to transportation is the largest challenge as well as services for new immigrants.

Vice Chair Rudnick asked if services are provided to children over the age of five years. Dr. Salimpour stated that the mandate of the First Five Commission is to work with families with children under the age of five. However, if there happens to be children in those families over the age of five, the warm line has up until this time been providing support. He cautioned however that at some point in the future, resources may not allow such broad family support.

Commissioner Hurewitz asked Dr. Salimpour to describe the warm line's language capabilities as well as the nature and capability of the software used at the warm line.

Dr. Salimpour indicated that in addition to English and Spanish speaking staff, the warm line has staff who speak an additional nine languages. Beyond those languages a translation services is employed, especially with Asian languages.

With respect to technology, all of the software that is used was developed in house and is proprietary to First 5 LA. He described how the software captures the caller's phone number and exact address. The software also allows for calls to be stored by zip code and SPA. Additionally, the software allows warm line staff to connect the caller to resources in their community. The data captured by the software also allows for complete data analysis and program evaluation.

Commissioner Ma offered to provide Dr. Salimpour with introductions to those in the Asian media to expand their campaign efforts into the Asian community.

In response to Chair Williams, Ms. Perez-Guzman stated that the First 5 Commission has invested \$12 million in the warm line to be allocated over three years. Approximate staff size is 50 with 40 temporary staff that are employed during spike periods. Chair Williams suggested exploring the medi-vac transportation agency and other agencies to address barriers toward transportation.

Finally, Dr. Salimpour shared that NexCare was recognized by the National Institute of Health and was awarded a contract to develop the Go Local Program. He explained that the Go Local Program links med-line plus health care topics and issues with local resources and recommended services in Los Angeles County.

Chair Williams thanked Dr. Salimpour, Ms. Perez-Guzman and Gayle Byock for their presentation and outstanding efforts.

DCFS Budget Report: Referring to a distributed document, Tito Barin, DCFS, depicted the Department's current fiscal allocation from the state and then compared it to the Governor's proposed budget for fiscal year 2004-05. He stated that the Department's budget request for fiscal year 2004-05 does not reflect the Governor's proposed budget. Based on prior statewide allocation, the Department has attempted to determine Los Angeles County's share of funds.

Mr. Barin stated that based on the Department's analysis, the Department is positively impacted by the Governor's proposed budget. Negative impact is anticipated only in the areas of ILP, Adoption, Foster Parent Training and Recruitment and the CCL Foster Family Homes. He did note that there is an anticipated increase in Promoting Safe and Stable Families and Child Welfare Services.

Commissioner Hurewitz asked if the Department has completed any analysis on trends with respect to detention rates and how that might be tied to the Department's budget request and allocation of funds to specific programs. Chief Deputy Director, John Oppenheim, stated that the IVE Waiver application is predicated on reducing the reliance

on out of home placement. He added that each office is working on plans to divert detentions and keep children safely with their families. He further indicated that the call volume into the Hotline has decreased since 2002.

Commissioner Hurewitz asked Mr. Barin to clarify the funding allocation to the adoption program/services. Mr. Barin explained that the Adoption Basic and the Federal Incentive funds are to be seen as one source of money as they are used to provide the same services which then shows an increase of \$259,000.00. Mr. Oppenheim added that the Department's biggest budget challenge comes in the form of unavoidable costs which the State has not recognized in its budgets over the years. There will be an approximate increase of \$35 million for the Department next year to maintain its current operation. The CAO has asked the Department to absorb that anticipated cost. Mr. Oppenheim stated that CSWs, SCSWs and PHNs are out of the Department's curtailment plan. Instead, administrative staff positions would be considered if such a curtailment is necessary.

Commissioner Sorkin inquired about the viability of EPSDT, Systems of Care, Probation and Health services support ability to DCFS. With the potential closure of the probation camps there is an anticipation of approximately 1500 youth coming into foster care for which no planning has taken place. However, Mr. Oppenheim is hopeful that the legislature will renew the sunset date for the investment of TANF dollars that fund the camps. Mr. Barin added that there will be a negative impact on the Department from supporting county agencies due to the widespread cuts from the Vehicle License Fees. Mr. Oppenheim does not anticipate a cut to EPSDT funding.

Chair Williams asked for an explanation about the potential impact of a reduction to CCL –Foster Family Home. Mr. Oppenheim explained that CCLs budget was significantly reduced in prior years which inhibited their ability to do widespread reviews of licensed foster homes. Because Los Angeles County does not handle the licensing function, Mr. Oppenheim does not believe there will be an impact on the Department.

Joan Smith, Deputy Director Finance, indicated that the most significant issue regarding the budget is how the Department chooses to approach the budget in the coming year. With respect to the Governor's proposed budget she indicated that the two significant issues are 1) relative assessments and 2) a proposal regarding the assistance portion of the budget. She explained that currently there is a proposal that would allow the state to retain the dollars that are currently collected from child support payments to support out of home costs. The potential impact is the loss of \$1.7 million if this proposal is accepted.

With respect to relative assessments, initially the state allocated funds to approve relative homes. Those funds have been reduced over time with the understanding that the level of funds needed to assess the homes on a less than annual basis would be the corresponding reduction in workload which would match the reduction in funds. It has not been determined how relatives would be chosen to be reassessed.

Commissioner Sorkin asked if the Department will be maintaining its current availability of beds at Metropolitan State Hospital. Ms. Smith responded that the Department is looking more towards a service authorization model rather than contracting or purchasing a set level of services from any facility or service provider.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Dr. Sanders reported that the initial phase of the reallocation of staff has been completed. The lessons learned from the Mac Laren Children's Center (MCC) staff redeployment are being applied to current training efforts.
- Dr. Sanders reported that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) has not yet approved the IVE Waiver (Waiver) request. The issue under discussion relates specifically to a residential academy identified in the request. He anticipates approval during the February 10, 2004 BOS meeting. He further commented that he has received support for the Waiver at the state level, but work will still need to take place in light of the state's budget.

Commissioner Hurewitz inquired about the implementation timetable for the Waiver and the potential for impacting next year's budget. Dr. Sanders indicated that implementation could begin by the next federal fiscal year which begins in October 2004. If implementation takes place within that time frame, there would only be a limited impact on the 2004-05 budget.

Commissioner Sorkin asked whether training for the redeployed staff will include the work currently taking place with Judge Nash regarding the psychotropic drug protocol. Dr. Sanders was not able to respond specifically to her question, but did comment about the utilization of the Public Health Nurses. Commissioner Sorkin expressed her concern that training should be "state of the art" in light of recent findings about the impact of certain drugs on children/youth.

Commissioner Hurewitz asked Dr. Sanders to comment further on the redeployment and the residential academy. Dr. Sanders stated he has been exploring options for youth who are replaced from one group home to another. The question is whether another model exists. The Broad Foundation has put forward a proposal of a residential academy as a potential model. Whether IVE funds should support the capitol costs of such an academy has been under discussion. He stated at this point there is no endorsement to develop an academy but the Waiver does reference the academy model as a potential service to explore. Chair Williams asked if such an academy would be similar to a MCC facility. Dr. Sanders stated that this is at the crux of the discussion as the youth that would be targeted are higher level youth.

With respect to the redeployment, Dr. Sanders stated that the court liaison group is the only group that did not transfer as scheduled. Plans are being made in conjunction with the courts to ensure a smooth transition. He acknowledged that there is mixed feelings on the part of the Department's staff. Commissioner Hurewitz asked if there is an evaluation in place to determine if the initiative is successful in

terms of its impact on programs and outcomes expected from the dismantled programs. Dr. Sanders stated that there was no formal evaluation in place. He further commented that there are ways to evaluate and will bring this to the Executive Team. One measure of success could be seen through the SPA realignment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no request for public comment.

MEETING ADJOURNED